

# Swine flu kills nine Palestinians

December 29 2012

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Nine Palestinians have died in an outbreak of the H1N1 influenza strain known as swine flu, the office of Palestinian prime minister Salam Fayyad said on Saturday.

"Latest figures and information...show that 187 cases have so far been recorded, the majority of which are in the northern West Bank," it said in a statement. "The number of recorded deaths... stands at nine until now."

It added that the Palestinian health ministry "has the necessary medicines, testing kits and equipment to deal efficiently with the spread of the virus".

The virus has affected Israel and the Palestinian territories in the past, killing dozens of people.

In 2009, an H1N1 epidemic erupted in Mexico and spread into a worldwide pandemic that caused at least 17,000 deaths.

In 1997, the H5N1 strain of influenza, commonly known as [bird flu](#), broke out in Hong Kong.

Spreading from live birds to humans through direct contact, it causes fever and breathing problems and claimed 359 human lives in 15 countries, mainly in Asia and Africa, from 2003 to August of this year, according to the [World Health Organisation](#).

Nearly all major epidemic diseases in humans originated in livestock and health professionals keep a constant watch on animal diseases to assess the risk of strains developing that can cross the species barrier.

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